

Utah State University

DigitalCommons@USU

---

Fall Student Research Symposium 2021

Fall Student Research Symposium

---

12-9-2021

## Mental Health Literacy and the Impact of Gender

Nathan Clay

Utah State University, nathanclay8@gmail.com

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.usu.edu/fsrs2021>



Part of the [Accounting Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Clay, Nathan, "Mental Health Literacy and the Impact of Gender" (2021). *Fall Student Research Symposium 2021*. 80.

<https://digitalcommons.usu.edu/fsrs2021/80>

This Book is brought to you for free and open access by the Fall Student Research Symposium at DigitalCommons@USU. It has been accepted for inclusion in Fall Student Research Symposium 2021 by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@USU. For more information, please contact [digitalcommons@usu.edu](mailto:digitalcommons@usu.edu).



# Mental Health Literacy and the Impact of Gender

Authors: Nathan Clay; Jacob Gossner; Elizabeth Fauth; Ty Aller; & Raechel Russo



## Purpose of the study

We examined associations between gender and components of Mental Health Literacy (MHL).

The baseline assumption, based on prior literature, is that women will have a higher knowledge related to mental health compared to men.

## Introduction

Recent studies have placed an ever-increasing emphasis on the Mental Health Literacy of individuals and the implications in society (Cotton et al., 2006).

This shift in evaluating an individual's comprehensive knowledge of MHL has mainly been studied using a vignette methodology (Aldersey et al., 2015).

Dr. Aller has used a different approach in breaking down MHL into three components that all contribute to mental health literacy: Knowledge, Self-Efficacy, and Behavior.

This is based on the health belief model and social cognitive theory (Aller et al., 2021)

- Knowledge:** is an individual's knowledge of identifying, locating resources for, and responding to mental health situations.

- Self-Efficacy:** is a comprehensive term for an individual's belief in their ability or capacity to succeed in a given situation.

- Behavior:** in this context, is the specific actions an individual takes to respond to mental health situations.

## Methods

- Data was collected by Dr. Aller and his team through MTURK
- The sample was college students across the U.S. (female  $N=183$ ; male  $N=268$ ; transgender female  $N=1$ ; Gender questioning  $N=1$ )
- Possible gender responses included:
  - Female, transgender female, male, transgender male, gender questioning, two-spirit, and other
- We analyzed male and female responders because there were so few participants with other gender identities
- We ran t-tests and correlations using gender on *Knowledge, Self-Efficacy, and Behavior.*

## Mental Health Literacy (MHL) by Gender

		Mean	SD
MHL Knowledge	Male	8.45	3.37
	Female	9.45	4.21
MHL Self-Efficacy	Male	69.63	20.4
	Female	70.33	18.61
MHL Behavior	Male	24.97	17.42
	Female	26.01	15.86

## Correlations of Mental Health Literacy in Women

		MHAA Knowledge	MHAA Self-Efficacy	MHAA Behavior
MHAA Knowledge	Pearson Correlation	1		
	Sig (2-tailed)			
MHAA Self-Efficacy	Pearson Correlation	0.056	1	
	Sig (2-tailed)	not significant		
MHAA Behavior	Pearson Correlation	-0.137	0.364	1
	Sig (2-tailed)	not significant	0.000	

## Correlations of Mental Health Literacy in Men

		MHAA Knowledge	MHAA Self-Efficacy	MHAA Behavior
MHAA Knowledge	Pearson Correlation	1		
	Sig (2-tailed)			
MHAA Self-Efficacy	Pearson Correlation	-0.137	1	
	Sig (2-tailed)	0.025		
MHAA Behavior	Pearson Correlation	-0.179	0.626	1
	Sig (2-tailed)	0.003	0.000	

## Results

- t-tests:** Women had statistically higher scores than men at the  $p < .01$  level in Knowledge; There was no significant gender difference in mean self-efficacy or mean behavior.
- Correlations:** There was no significant correlation between women's MHL knowledge and MHL self-efficacy and behavior, but in men, higher MHL Knowledge was associated with lower MHL Self-efficacy and lower MHL Behaviors.
- Self-efficacy was correlated with behavior in both men and women, but the relationship was stronger in men: people with higher MHL Self-efficacy had higher MHL Behaviors .

## Discussion and Implications

- In men and women, our results highlight the relationship between mental health self-efficacy and mental health responding behaviors.
- This supports that building self-efficacy in mental health literacy may foster behavior change, although our findings were not causal, just correlational.
- A peculiar finding was that knowledge showed no significant relationship with self-efficacy or behavior in women, but showed a negative relationship with self-efficacy/behavior in men, though not in the expected direction.
- Most studies of mental health literacy rely only on Knowledge of mental health issues.
- These analyses show that self-efficacy may be more important when trying to target responding behaviors
- Follow up research should be considered to see if such relationships hold in the general population, outside of college students

## Acknowledgments

I would first like to thank Jacob who has been so gracious as to donate so much of his time helping me learn and grow this semester in the skills of qualitative research. Second, I would like to thank Dr. Fauth and Dr. Aller for allowing me to work under them and to use their research data/expertise's without which this poster would not be possible.

## References

Aller, Ty B., et al. "Mental Health Awareness and Advocacy (MHAA) for Youth: An Evaluation of a College-Based Mental Health Literacy Curriculum." *Mental Health & Prevention*, Elsevier, 23 May 2021. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2212657021000887>

Aldersey, Heather. "A Systematic Examination of the Nature and Content of Vignettes in Schizophrenia Research." *Journal of Mental Health (Abingdon, England)*, U.S. National Library of Medicine, June 2016. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/26439609/>.

Furnham, Adrian, et al. "Knowledge of Mental Illnesses: Two Studies Using a New Test." *Psychiatry Research*, Elsevier, 5 Aug. 2016. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0165178116300610>.

Haavik, L., and Joe Hatloy. "Help Seeking for Mental Health Problems in an Adolescent Population: The Effect of Gender." *Taylor & Francis*, July 2017. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/10.1080/09638237.2017.1340630>.

Hadjimina, Eleana, and Adrian Furnham. "Influence of Age and Gender on Mental Health Literacy of Anxiety Disorders." *Psychiatry Research*, Elsevier, 1 Feb. 2017. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S016517811630854X>.

Lee, Eun, et al. "Age Differences in Health Literacy: Do Younger Korean Adults Have a Higher Level of Health Literacy than Older Korean Adults?" *Health & Social Work*, U.S. National Library of Medicine, Aug. 2017. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/28859424/>.

Sue M. Cotton, Annemarie Wright. "Influence of Gender on Mental Health Literacy in Young Australians - Sue M. Cotton, Annemarie Wright, Meredith G. Harris, Anthony F. Jorm, Patrick D. McGorry, 2006." *SAGE Journals*, <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1080/1440-1614.2006.01885.x>.